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Short Communication

First record of brachyuran crab *Jonas choprai* Serene, 1971 (Crustacea: Decapoda) in Indian waters at Parangipettai, southeast coast of India

S. Manokaran, *S. Ajmal Khan, P. S. Lyla and S. Murugan

Centre of Advanced Study in Marine Biology
*Annamalai University, Parangipettai-608 502,Tamil Nadu, India. *E-mail: s_ajmalkhan@rediffmail.com*

Abstract

During the routine biodiversity survey in the landing centre at Parangipettai, a female specimen of the branchyuran crab *Jonas choprai* Serene, 1971 was noticed in the trawl catch. This is the first record of this crab species from the Indian waters. Characters which are of help in distinguishing this species from the other known species of this genus are indicated.

A brachyuran crab (Fig. 1) belonging to Family Corystidae was recorded for the first time in the Indian waters from Parangipettai (11° 29'N lat. 79° 46'E long.) situated on the southeast coast of India. It was collected from the trawl landings on December, 2006. The depth of haul made was 60-70 metres. The species was identified as *Jonas choprai* Serene, 1971. It belongs to the order Decapoda and suborder Reptantia of the class Crustacea.

Distribution: Serene (1971) described this species from a sacculinid infested female specimen collected from Keelung in Taiwan. The holotypic organism (Coll.Fisheries Research Institute-ZRC1969.11.2.3) measured 21.0 by 28mm. Later, Ng *et al*. (2000) also described the species from Taiwan waters. The carapace width of the present female specimen collected from Parangipettai waters was 17 mm and the carapace length (as measured from the tip of the rostrum to posterior margin of carapace) was 27mm.

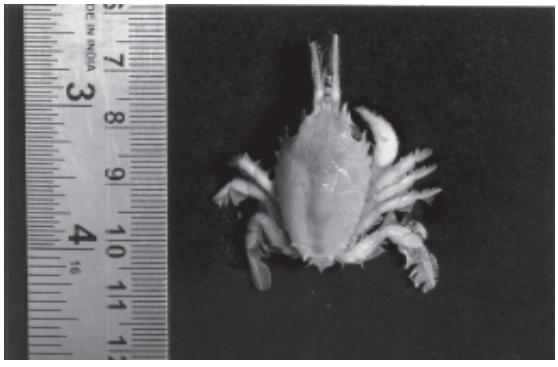

Fig.1. *Jonas choprai* (female)

***Identification*:** Altogether 6 species have been recognized under the genus *Jonas.* They are *Jonas distincta, J. formosae, J. indica, J. choprai, J. macrophthalmus* and *J. leuteanus* (Chen, 1998; Ng *et al*., 2000).

As a species of *Jonas,* however, *J. choprai* is rather unusual in its relatively broader carapace and supraorbital spines which are distinctly longer than the rostrum. All other known species *of Jonas* have supraorbital spines which are distinctly shorter or at most, just reaching the rostrum. The only species of *Gomeza* on the other hand, has supraorbital spines which are longer than the rostrum. Besides, when compared to known congeners, *J. choprai* has its basal antennal segment strongly granulated with some sharp tubercles (vs. smooth to weakly granulated), the merus of its last ambulatory leg has three spines on ventro-distal margin (vs. only one distinct spine) and the basis-ischium of the last ambulatory leg has three prominent spines (vs. absent). Among *Jonas* species, the form of the anterolateral armature of *J. choprai* is very much similar to that of *J. distincta*, but in *J. choprai,* the teeth are even stronger and proportionately larger. With regards to the egg shaped carapace and long supraorbital spines, *J.*

choprai superficially resembles *Gomeza bicornis,* but as discussed earlier, it lacks the generic characters of *Gomeza.*

Description: Carapace is oval in shape and is about 1.4 times longer than broader. The dorsal surface does not have hair and is concave transversely and longitudinally. In small specimens, evenly spaced granules are found over the carapace, except the centre and transversely in the anterior region, where large granules are present. The basal antennal segment is granulated with two sharp tubercles on the outer distal surface while the first antennal segment reaches tip of the inner supraorbital tooth. Eyes are relatively larger and completely filling the orbits. The cervical groove and the grooves covering the gastric, cardiac and intestinal regions are quite distinct.

The bifurcated rostrum is prominent, the base of which is relatively narrow. Rostral teeth are short and separated by a deep "U" shaped notch. Broad deep "U" shaped notch separate the rostrum from the inner supraorbital tooth. The margin of the supraorbital region is granulated with two distinct notches. The inner tooth is very long which extends beyond the tip of the rostrum which is gently curved, when viewed laterally. The outer tooth is distinct. The inner supraorbital margin is also granulated and the tooth in the inner orbit is very strong and is shorter than the inner supraorbital tooth when viewed from above. The third maxillipeds are relatively elongated and the outer surfaces are granular.

Five pairs of thoracic legs are well developed. The first pair of lags is chelate in nature and subequal. Granules are present on the inner and outer surfaces of all segments. A small tubercle is present on the inner distal angle of basis-ischium. Merus not relatively short, dorsal margin has 7 sharp spines, the size of which increases from middle of merus to distal. Ventral margin of merus granulated with anteriorly directed distal spines which are sharp. Subtriangular carpus with long spine in the inner distal angle. One short sharp tooth and one sharp recurved spine are present respectively on dorsal margin and median distal surface. Fingers of cheleped are shorter than palm and the tips of fingers are curved. Cutting edges have blunt teeth and denticles. Numerous small sharp granules present on dorsal surface of dactylus. Lower side of hand has a row of closely packed small rounded granule resembling stridulatory ridge. Numerous sharp slightly recurved spines and tubercles are present on dorsal margin of palm. Ventral margin of palm with numerous granules and tubercles of varying sharpness. Median surface of palm has several sharp tubercles.

Among the walking legs, the fourth leg is the largest followed by second. Three distinct ventral spines are present on subdistal region of the merus of fourth leg. However, spines are not present on merus of other legs. Three subdistal ventral spines present on basis-ischium of fourth leg and the outer surface is with scattered small granules. The above segment in other legs is unarmed. Dactylus of ambulatory legs 1-3 is styliform and slightly compressed laterally. Dactylus of last leg is distinctly spatuliform. Lateral margin of all legs with setae.

The abdomen is short with six segments followed by the telson. The tip of telson is rounded and the lateral margins are not concave. In segments 2 and 3 the lateral surfaces are granulated. Segments are trapezoidal. Segment 1 is with small rounded granules on the median distal margin. The appendages on abdomen are setose and properly developed. Five pairs of pleopods are present. While the first pair is uniramous, the remaining ones are biramous.

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